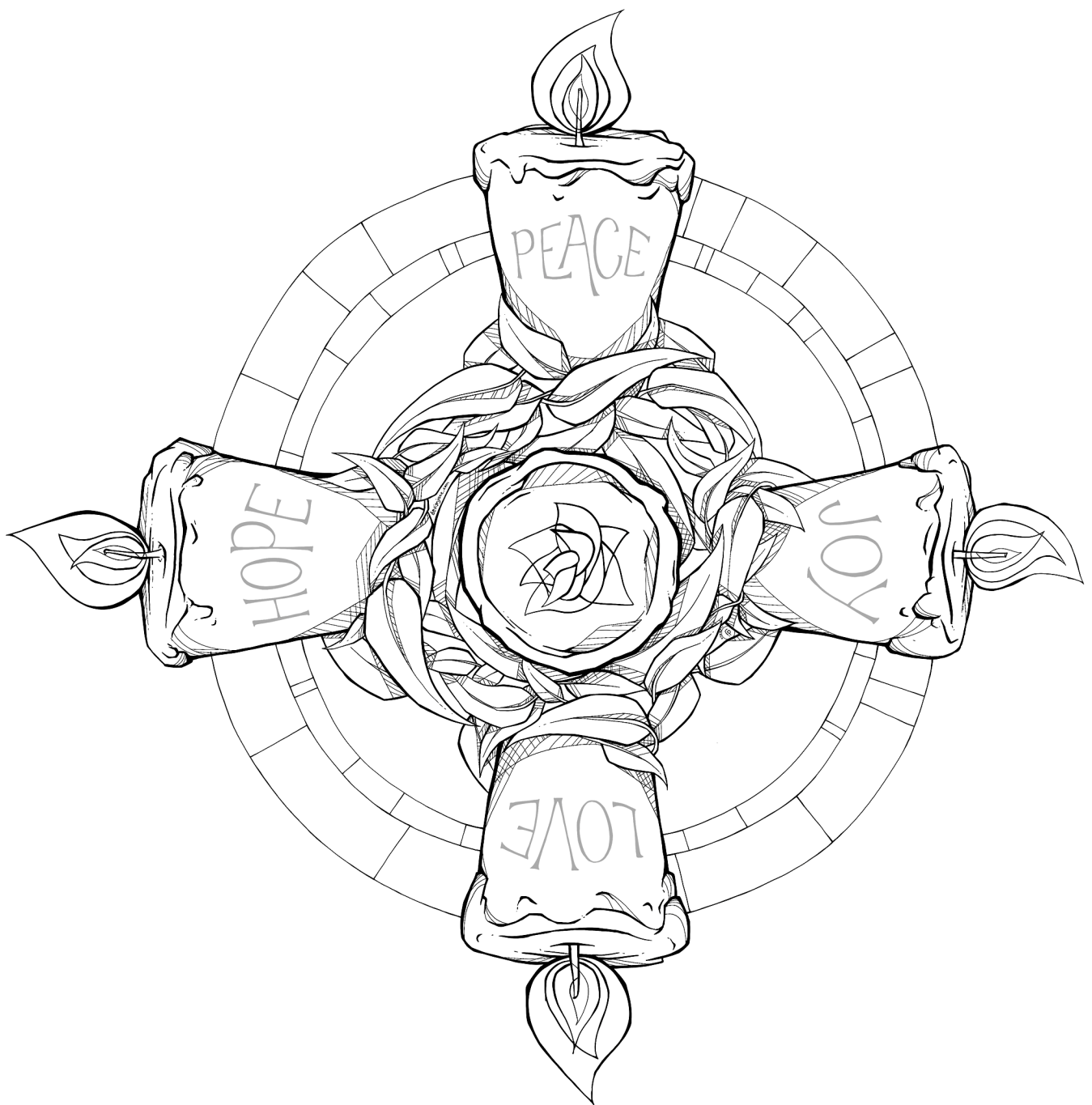


ADVENT

OUR SEASON OF HOPE.
EAST COAST BAYS PARISH 2021



Artwork by **Jane Maisey** rsj

Christmas Mass Timetable 2021

Thursday December 23:

6.30pm	Christmas Mass	St. John's Church	Fr. Alex	(25)
--------	----------------	-------------------	----------	------

Friday December 24:

4.00pm	Spanish Mass;	School yard	Fr. Alex	
6.00pm;	Christmas Eve	Schoolyard	Both Priests	(100)
8.30pm;	Christmas Eve	St. John's Church	Fr. Emile	(100)
9.30pm;	Christmas Eve	St. Francis Church	Fr. Alex	(100)

Saturday December 25:

8.30am	Christmas Day	St. Francis Church	Fr. Emile	(100)
9.30am	Christmas Day	St. John's Church	Fr. Alex	(100)

Sunday December 26:

7.30am	Holy Family	St. Francis Church	Fr. Alex	(100)
9.00am	Holy family	St. John's Church	Fr. Emile	(100)
10.30am	Holy Family	St. Francis Church	Fr. Alex	(100)
12.00	Spanish Mass	St. John's Church	Fr. Alex	(100)

(100) Number of people - Vaccine Pass required

(25) Number of people - Non Vaccine Pass

Normal Mass times resume from 27 December

Please check the current newsletter for Mass times

CHRISTMAS FOR ME AS A CHILD

Fr. Emile

Seems like yesterday. Mmmm, now let me see. Yes, I do remember something about Christmas time in Holland. I got the message to behave, otherwise Santa would not be able to come down the chimney to drop off my presents. I also remember some of the Santa parades along the street of the town where we lived – Roermond.

Christmas in New Zealand, in 1950, was very different. Mum and Dad and us 4 boys lived out at Bayley's Beach. Santa didn't have a boat apparently, so we didn't see him there. But, we were told by some of the neighbours that our presents were buried in the sand on the beach. So, we had to get down there and dig. Toeroas – yum, great gift from Santa, and apparently he gave so many, we could dig many times to get our quota.

My time at the Convent School in Dargaville and Whangarei was special with the way the Sisters of St Joseph taught us about Jesus and so Christmas took on a whole new meaning. I owe these Sisters so much for their patience and energy in leading me along the Road of Faith to Jesus..

So, Happy and Blessed Christmas to you all. Think back to your childhood Christmas times - and know the journey continues for us all.

EACH OF US HAS A MISSION TO ACCOMPLISH

Pope Francis

The question of what we are to do recalls that "life has a task for us", the Pope said. It is not something left to chance, but rather, "It is a gift that the Lord grants us", since He asks to discover ourselves and "to work hard to make the dream that is your life come true". We all have a mission to accomplish, he explained, and we should not be afraid to ask the Lord this question often: What can we do for the Lord, and what can we for ourselves, our brothers and sisters, the Pope asked, and how can this be translated concretely into contributing to the good of the Church and society? Advent is the time we need "to stop and ask ourselves how to prepare for Christmas", what we should do for Jesus and others.

Pray and reflect with us this Advent during this season of preparation, hope and expectation ahead of Christmas.

"The Lord comes that we might find him in this world of ours." *Laudato Si'* #236

Advent brings us closer to Christ who is with us. We are reminded that no one is beyond the reach of God's love.

We wait with joy for the Lord, the hope of the world.

We are called to reach out with love to our sisters and brothers in need, sharing our hope for a world transformed. *Pope Francis*

HAPPY & BLESSED CHRISTMAS

Advent Wreath

It is the time of Advent again – the time of preparation for Christmas. The Latin words “ad venire” meaning “towards arrival”.

During Advent we have the wonderful tradition of Advent wreaths. When I grew up in Germany, most families had a wreath, a kind of crown out of conifers that they bought just before the first Sunday of Advent. The conifers, the trees that never lose their leaves have a special meaning of Hope in the Germanic world. Christmas is the celebration of Hope, and the First Sunday of Advent is dedicated to the virtue of Hope. Very appropriate.

My parents never had a typical wreath. Instead, my mother would have a special Advent bowl. It was a bowl in which you could put a wet sponge. Then you would stick the little branches into the sponge and decorate them with something red – often it would be red ribbons. My mother’s bowl had four candle stick holders in which we would put four red candles.

The typical Advent wreaths would also have four red candles. Each Sunday of Advent we would light one more candle. On the fourth Sunday of Advent all four candles would be lit.

On Christmas eve, the Advent wreath would be taken down and the Christmas tree would be set up. I remember that we had a very huge Advent wreath in the church of my hometown. It would hang down from the ceiling of the 500-year old church. On Christmas eve, the red Advent candles would be taken down and many white candles would be installed on the wreath.

To me, the red candles symbolised warmth, love and hope. When the white candles on the church wreath were lit, the festive season had started. The white colour seemed to be lighter, brighter and would spread more immediate joy than the hope for something in the future.

Here, in New Zealand, the traditions are different. For someone from the Northern Hemisphere, it is strange to have Christmas during summer in the first place. It can be so warm and light outside that you look for refuge inside the house. In Europe, the candles give warmth and light to the people. Everything around traditional Christmas celebrations is to do with winter and cold, dark nights.

No need for red candles? In New Zealand, the traditions around the candles on the Advent wreath are different to what I have been used to. I was told that the Germans didn’t do it right. I was told that Catholics don’t have red candles on the Advent wreath....

So, I tried to find out more about the Advent wreaths. Apparently, it was a German Lutheran pastor, Johann Hinrich Wichern (1808–1881) who invented the Advent wreath about 180 years ago in order to give joy to children during the Industrial Revolution. Wichern had founded a mission school (Rauhes Haus) in Hamburg where the children asked him every day if Christmas had arrived yet. He decided to take a big old cart-wheel and decorated it with four big white candles to mark the four Sundays of Advent and he added many small red candles – one for every week day up to Christmas Eve. Therefore, the number of small candles would vary according to the date of the First of Advent. Wichern also used these candles to help the children learn how to count.



LIVING IN HOPE

‘May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.’

ROMANS 15: 13 NRSV

What is Hope?

Hope can sometimes be wishful thinking. We might often say:

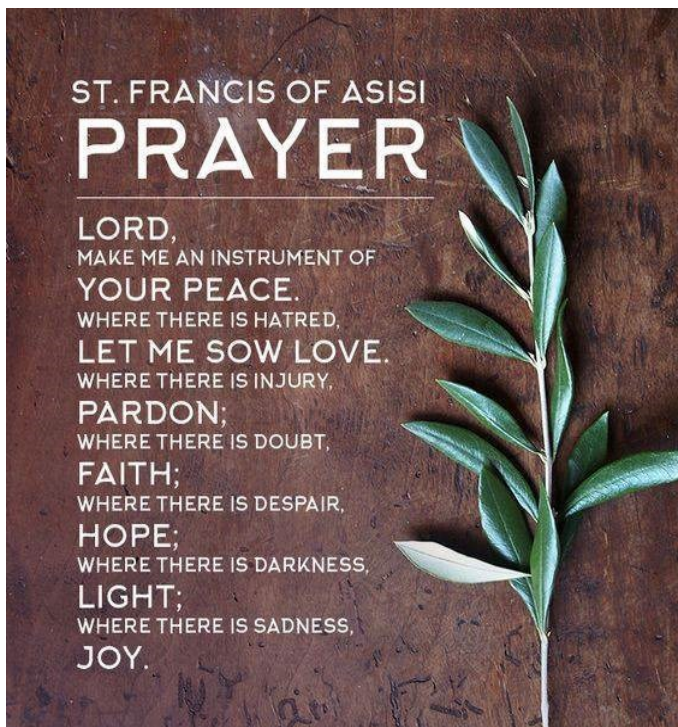
‘I hope it doesn’t rain today’ or ‘I hope my bus comes soon’.

Wishful thinking is often an avoidance of reality.

It is passive in nature.

It expresses a belief, or doubt, in the hand of fickle fate.

It tends to have a fixed understanding of what the desired outcome is and how it will be achieved.



Christian hope:

Begins with what ‘is’, facing this reality.

Hope sees not just what is, but what can be; it is not blind to obstacles; it takes them seriously and is practical in addressing them.

Hope is active, flowing from the activity of the Holy Spirit within us

Hope is an expression of God who is enduringly creative and resourceful within what is.

Hope flows from belief in God who is ever incarnate in what ‘is’. In Christ God continually enters our broken, suffering and disunited world and by his living, dying and rising makes all things new.

Hope is a work of the Holy Spirit within us, leading all that is divided into unity.

Hope is not only about what we believe but what we live.

Hope is the overflow of the Spirit engaging us in bringing about a new creation in Christ

Hope moves us into God’s vision for ourselves, our church and our neighbourhood.

Hope is co-operation with the Holy Spirit

Hope expresses our willingness to work in partnership with God. In our lives and in our work we seek to understand what the Holy Spirit is doing in our lives and around us as and to co-operate with this work.

Hope involves waiting

We wait **actively**...working, and searching, for life is in our hands.

It is the one who seeks who finds, and the one who asks who receives, and the one who knocks who will find the door opened.

And yet we also wait **passively** – for the right time to come, for growth to take its course, and to receive by gift what cannot be ours by effort alone.

Hope leads us to act **purposefully** in the present as we anticipate the work of Love in the future through drawing on the memory of love received in the past.

Continued



Living in hope

Prayer and reflection exercises

Witnesses to hope

Read through the passages about hope in a prayerfully reflective way – in God's company. You might want to take one each day and dwell with it. As you begin ask God to deepen your ability to see and act in hope. Read the passage slowly – perhaps more than once, dwelling on lines or phrases that seem to connect with you. Consider what they say and how this speaks to you – share with God thoughts and questions that emerge. Then read the passage again and let it lead you into a time of simply resting in God's presence.

The hope we carry

Look back with God on your life and faith journey. As you reflect on your experience of life and the goodness of God what is the message of hope you have to share with others?

Waiting and working

Hope involves waiting and working. Gardening symbolically expresses this partnership in hope. We sow seeds and nurture them as they grow, but the growth itself is a work of wonder.



Identify a hope that you sense God has planted within you. It might be to do with your own life and growth or about others whom you labour and care for. Sow seed in a seed tray or small pot, following any instructions supplied with them. When the seeds are big enough plant them out in your garden or in a larger container.

The light of hope

Bring an area of your work before God in prayer. Imagine hope to be a light. Where are the darkest corners in need of this light? Move the light of hope so it shines into these dark place – into every deep recess where light has been absent. What hope do you begin to see revealed?



Acting in hope

Hope is an action more than a feeling. We remember the works of God in the past and so anticipate the work of God in the future, leading us to act purposefully in the present. We recognize that we are invited to co-operate with what God desires to bring into being. Read one or more of the biblical stories about acting in hope – for example Jeremiah buying a field in a besieged city. Ask God to show you an action you can take as an expression of hope, whether this in relation to your own circumstances, or someone you care for or the community or the church you are part of.

Compiled by Father Vincent Fortunato.

COPING WITH GRIEF AT CHRISTMAS

Christmas is a time of mixed feelings for those who are missing someone they love. As we gather with family and friends, the absence of a loved one may be felt even more intensely. Whether it's a parent or partner who has left the family or a loved one who has died, you may be left feeling out of step with the jolliness of the tinsel and carols.

It is especially important at this time to take care of yourself and those around you who have also experienced significant loss or change. While some people keep busy to distract themselves, others prefer to withdraw to their memories and reflections; there is no right or wrong way to act or feel.

It's hard to predict how you'll be feeling, so put some safeguards into place.

Don't make any big decisions over Christmas time. You will probably be feeling enough stress and distraction, and there is no need to add to it. If possible, wait until the New Year.

Make plans to be around people who you trust and who understand that you might not be feeling very "jolly". Let them know that you may actually prefer to be alone sometimes, and they should not be offended if this is the case.

Give yourself some time to think about the person you are missing. Listen to music, look at pictures, cry if you feel you want or need to. This may mean you are less likely to be overwhelmed or caught off guard by Christmas 'triggers'.

If a family has been split through divorce or separation, Christmas day may become a logistic struggle for children who now have two places to be. Make this easier for them by including them in plans ahead of time and making the transition as smooth as possible, and do your best to avoid competition over time spent with children or size and expense of gifts.

Here are some things that might help you manage your grief feelings over Christmas.

- Do something to remember the person you are missing...
 - Play their favourite music
 - Go to a place they loved or do something you used to do together
 - Write them a Christmas card
 - Share memories and stories with others who loved them too
 - If children are missing the person too, involve them and find out how they would like to remember their loved one.
- Give yourself permission to do less. People will understand if you do not get the Christmas letter out, if you do not bake cookies for everyone or if you miss a few parties. The most important thing is taking care of yourself and those close to you.
- Accept help. If you feel as though you are not coping well, reach out to people you trust and say yes to offers of support or company.
- Let yourself have fun. If you are feeling happy, go with it – it does not mean that you are forgetting or forsaking the person who is not there.

New Year

With Christmas comes New Year, a milestone which prompts reflection upon the past and plans for the future. Memories may bring both pain and happiness, while thoughts of the future may bring reminders of lost dreams as well as hope. Be gentle with yourself at this time, too.

Gloria - By Joy Cowley

Glorious are you, Mystery of Life,
essence of all creation.
You are the symphony of stars and planets.
You are the music of the atoms within us.
You are the dawn on mountain peaks,
the moonlight on evening seas.
Forest and farm, the rush of the city,
everything is embraced in your love.

We rejoice as we sing our gratitude.

Glorious are you, O Jesus Christ,
Cosmic love in human flesh.
You graced the smallness of time and place
to teach us to dance to the music.
You walk on our seas and heal in our streets.
You make your home in our lives,
revealing that cross and resurrection
are one on the road to freedom.

Glorious are you, O Spirit of Truth,
wisdom and breath of our being.
You are the wind that sweeps our senses.
You are the fire that burns in our hearts.
You are the needle of the inner compass,
always pointing to true North,
guiding us on the sacred dance
into the Mystery of Life.

We rejoice as we sing our gratitude.

permission Joy Cowley



Drawing by Jane Maisey



Twelve Days of Christmas - An explanation

The "Twelve Days of Christmas" celebrates the official Christmas season which starts liturgically on Christmas Day and ends twelve days later on the Feast of the Epiphany. "My true love" refers to God, "me" is the individual Catholic.

The "**twelve lords a leaping**" are the twelve basic beliefs of the Catholic Church as outlined in the Apostles Creed.

The "**eleven pipers piping**" are the eleven Apostles who remained faithful after the treachery of Judas.

The "**ten ladies dancing**" are the Ten Commandments.

The "**nine drummers drumming**" are the nine choirs of angels which in those days of class distinction were thought important.

The "**eight maids a milking**" are the Eight Beatitudes.

The "**seven swans a swimming**" are the Seven Sacraments.

The "**six geese a laying**" are the Six Commandments of the Church or the six days of creation.

The "**five golden rings**" are the first five books of the Old Testament called the Torah which are generally considered the most sacred and important of all the Old Testament.

The "**four calling birds**" are the Four Gospels.

The "**three French hens**" are the Three Persons in God or the three gifts of the Wise Men.

The "**two turtle doves**" represent the two natures in Jesus: human and divine or the two Testaments, Old and New.

The "**partridge**" is the *piece de resistance*, Jesus himself, and the "**pear tree**" is the Cross.



The O Antiphons • Prayers for Catholic Kids

The O Antiphons are an ancient liturgical antiphon (response) sung or recited during the last seven days of Advent (one each day from December 17 through December 23) as part of the [Liturgy of Hours](#). (The Liturgy of Hours is the way the Church prays throughout the day.)

No one knows the exact origin of the O Antiphons, but Christians have been singing them since at least the fifth century. You might recognize some of the words, because the O Antiphons are the basis of the popular hymn O Come, O Come Emmanuel.

Each antiphon begins with a title of Christ taken from the Old Testament. Do a little detective work to figure out what they mean, using the Scripture references as clues.

December 17

O Wisdom,
coming forth from the mouth of the Most High, reaching from one end to the other, mightily and sweetly ordering all things:
Come and teach us the way of prudence.

December 18

O Adonai,
and leader of the House of Israel,
who appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush & gave him the law on Sinai:
Come and redeem us with an outstretched arm.

December 19

O Root of Jesse,
standing as a sign among the peoples;
before you kings will shut their mouths,
to you the nations will make their prayer:
Come and deliver us, and delay no longer.

December 20

O Key of David
and sceptre of the House of Israel;
you open and no one can shut;
you shut and no one can open:
Come and lead the prisoners from the prison house.

December 21

O Morning Star,
splendour of light eternal and sun
of righteousness:
Come and enlighten those who dwell in
darkness and the shadow of death.

December 22

O King of the nations,
and their desire,
the cornerstone making both one:
Come and save the human race,
which you fashioned from clay.

December 23

O Emmanuel,
our king and our lawgiver,
the hope of the nations and their Saviour:
Come and save us, O Lord our God.

Scripture References

Wisdom: Isaiah 11:2-3, Isaiah 28:29

Adonai: Isaiah 11:4-5, Isaiah 33:22

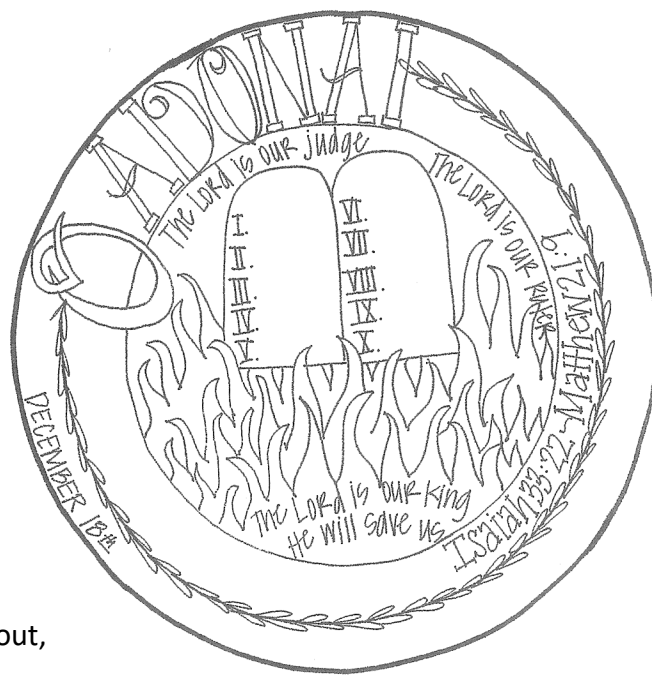
Root: Isaiah 11:1, Isaiah 11:10

Key of David: Isaiah 22:22, Isaiah 9:7, Isaiah 42:7

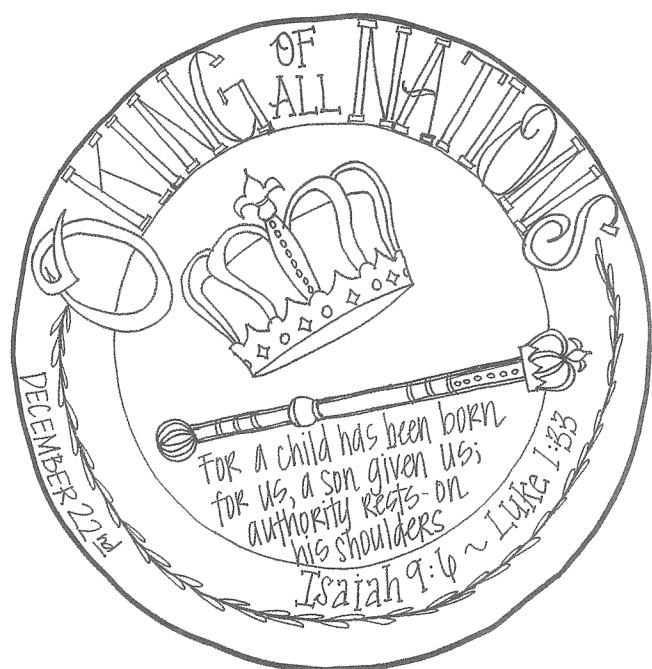
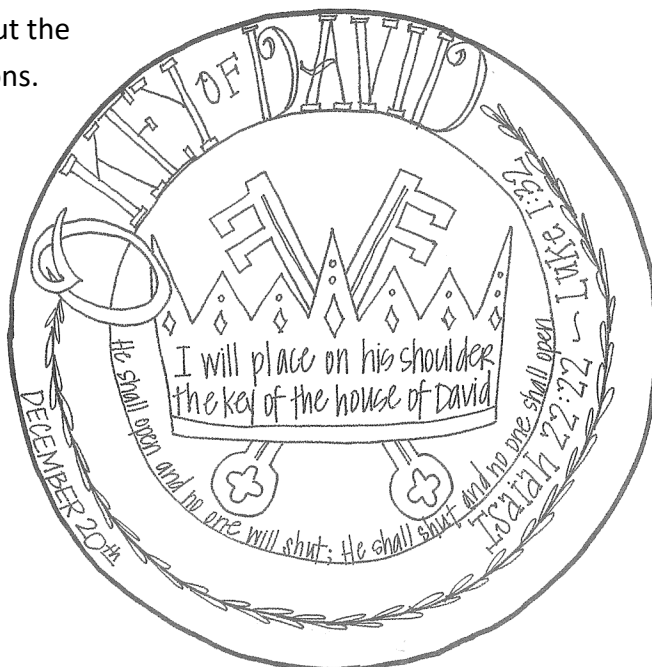
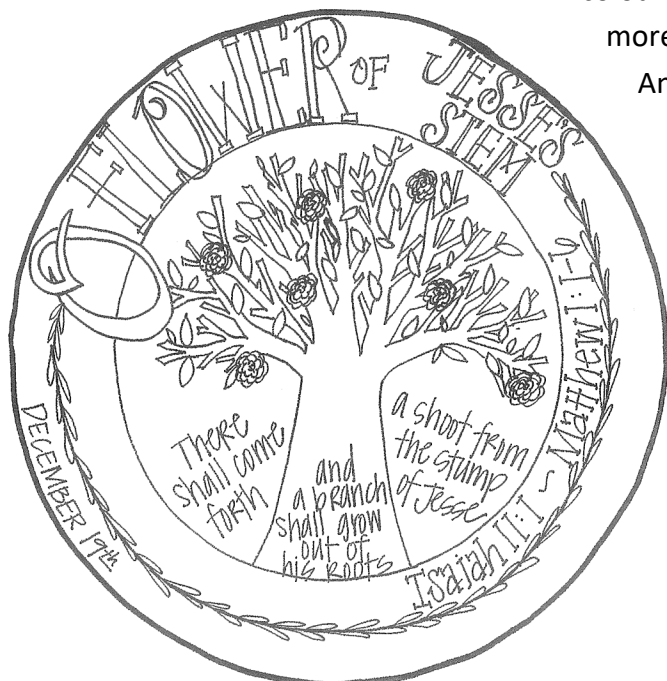
Morning star: Isaiah 9:2

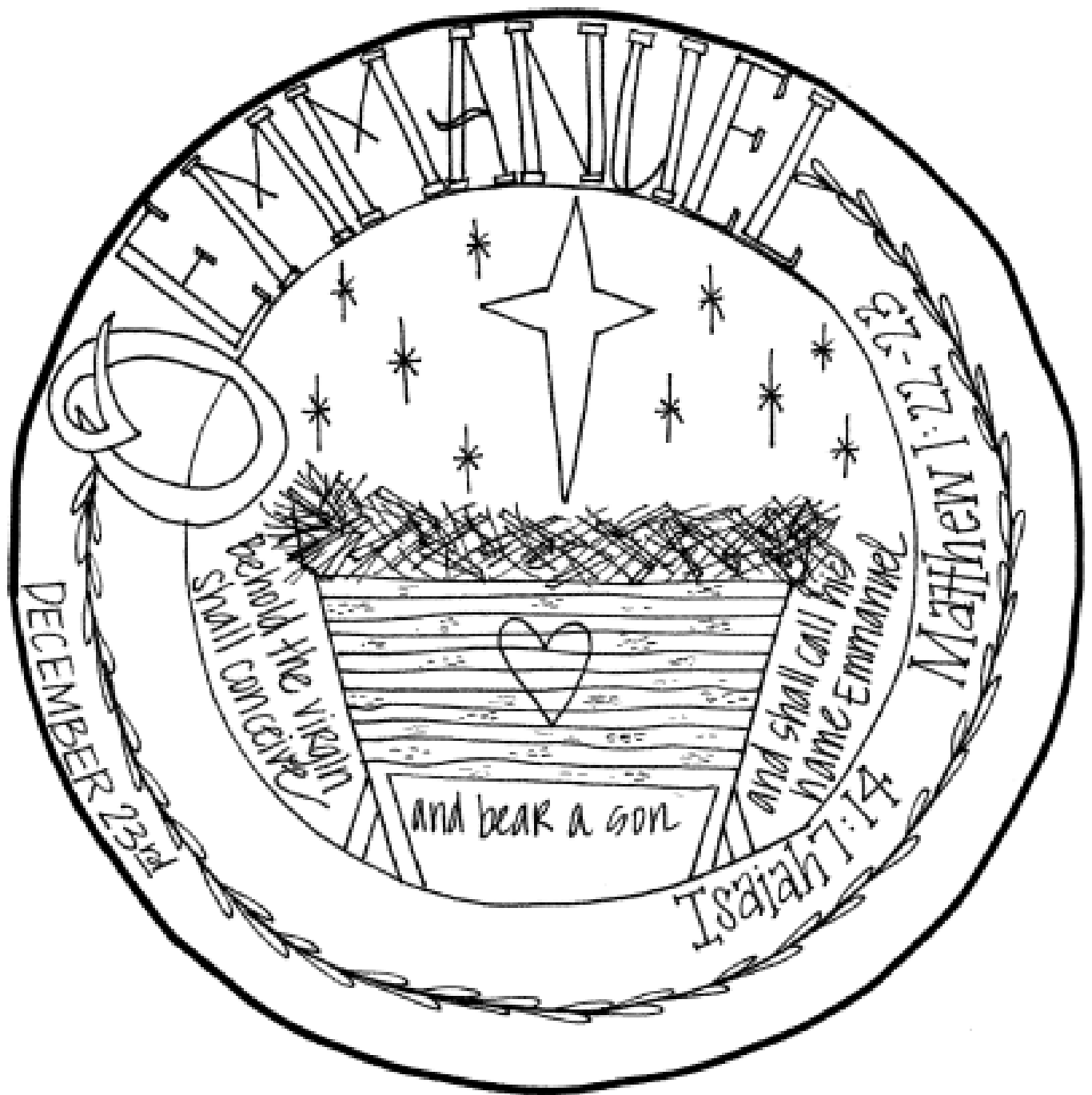
King of Nations: Isaiah 2:4, Isaiah 28:16

Emmanuel: Isaiah 7:14



Print, cut out,
colour and discover
more about the
Antiphons.

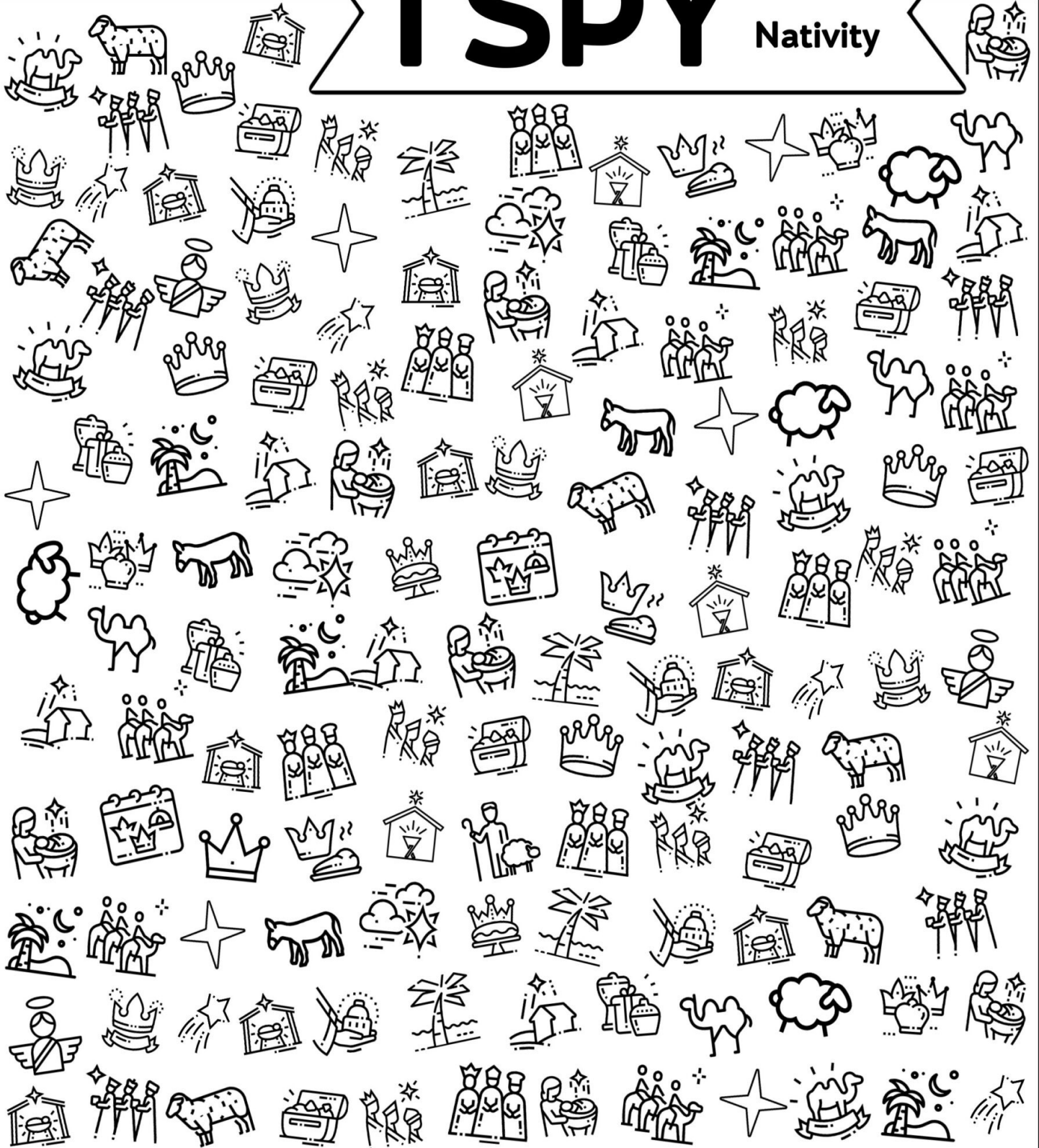




May the
Miracle of
Christmas
fill your heart
with joy.

I SPY

Nativity



- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| 2 | | 4 | | 4 | | 5 | | 4 | | 5 | | 7 | | 4 | | 6 | | 5 | |
| 1 | | 6 | | 7 | | 1 | | 3 | | 6 | | 7 | | 4 | | 7 | | 5 | |
| 3 | | 3 | | 4 | | 6 | | 2 | | 7 | | 5 | | 9 | | 6 | | 3 | |

THREE LITTLE TREES *(Anonymous)*

Once upon a mountain top, three little trees stood and dreamed of what they wanted to become when they grew up.

The first little tree looked up at the stars and said: "I want to hold treasure. It want to be covered with gold and filled with precious stones. I'll be the most beautiful treasure chest in the world."

The second little tree looked out at the small stream trickling by on s way to the ocean. "I want to be traveling mighty waters & carrying powerful kings. I'll be the strongest ship in the world."

The third little tree looked down into the valley below where busy men and women worked in a busy town. "I don't want to leave the mountain top at all. I want to grow so tall that when people stop to look at me, they'll raise their eyes to heaven and think of God. I will be the tallest tree in the world."

Years passed. The rain came, the sun shone, and the little trees grew tall. One day three woodcutters climbed the mountain. The first woodcutter looked at the first tree and said, "This tree is beautiful. It is perfect for me." With a swoop of his shining axe, the first tree fell..."Now I shall be made into a beautiful chest, I shall hold wonderful treasure!" the first tree said.

The second woodcutter looked at the second tree and said, "This tree is strong. It is perfect for me." With a swoop of his shining axe, the second tree fell. "Now I shall sail mighty waters" thought the second tree. "I shall be a strong ship for mighty kings."

The third tree felt her heart sink when the last woodcutter looked her way. She stood straight and tall and pointed bravely to heaven. But the woodcutter never even looked up. "Any kind of tree will do for me." He muttered. With a swoop of his shining axe, the third tree fell.

The first tree rejoiced when the woodcutter brought her to a carpenter's shop. But the carpenter fashioned the tree into a feed box for animals. The once beautiful tree was not covered with gold, nor with treasure. She was coated with saw dust and filled with hay for hungry farm animals.

The second tree smiled when the woodcutter took her to a shipyard, but no mighty sailing ship was made that day.

Instead, the once strong tree was hammered and sawed into a simple fishing boat. She was too small and too weak to sail to an ocean, or even a river instead she was taken to a little lake.

The third tree was confused when the woodcutter cut her into strong beams and left her in a lumberyard. "What happened," The once tall tree wondered. "All I ever wanted was to stay on the mountain top and point to God...

Many days and nights passed. The three trees nearly forgot their dreams. But one night, golden starlight poured over the first tree as a young woman placed her newborn baby in the feed box. I wish I could make a cradle for him." her husband whispered. The mother squeezed his hand and smiled as the starlight shone on the smooth and the sturdy wood. "This manger is beautiful." she said. And, suddenly, the first tree knew he was holding the greatest treasure in the world.

One evening a tired traveller & his friends crowded into the old fishing boat. The traveller fell asleep as the second tree quietly railed out into the lake. Soon a thundering and thrashing storm arose.

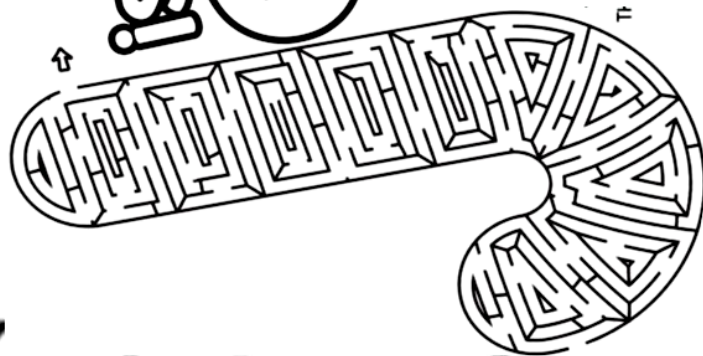
The Little tree shuddered. She knew she did not have the strength to carry so many passengers safely through with the wind and the rain. The tired man awakened. He stood up, stretched out his hand, and said, "Peace." The storm stopped as quickly as it had begun. And, suddenly, the second tree knew he was carrying the King of heaven and earth.

One Friday morning, the third tree was startled when her beams were yanked from the forgotten woodpile. She flinched as she was carried through an angry jeering crowd. She shuddered when soldiers nailed a man's hands to her. She felt ugly and harsh and cruel. But, on Sunday morning, when the sun rose and the earth trembled with joy beneath her, the third tree knew that God's love had changed everything. It had made the third tree strong. And, every time people thought of the third tree, they would think of God. That was better than being the tallest tree in the world.

So, next time you feel down because you didn't get what you want, just sit tight and be happy because God is thinking of something better to give you.

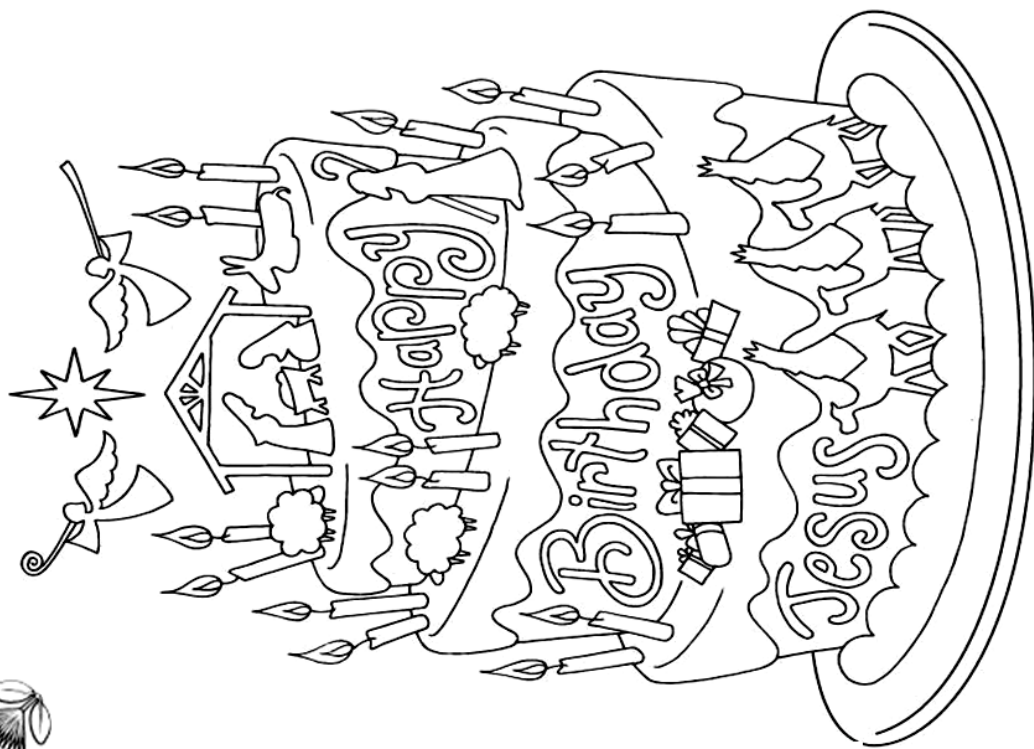
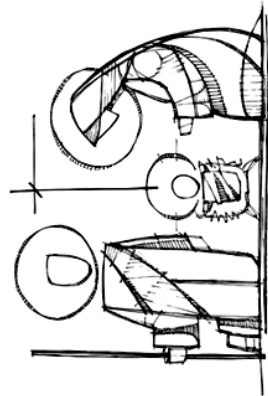


is for
eSUS



JOSEPHVQJDI EOBI
OTWI SESRXLUDCX
RVDKAFXCERZRZV
LHAREGNAMUZEMI
JQNVSEHANEKIHSV
EMGERLCQBGZPCP
SYENRUOJECNPERE
UGLXEKCMFZFNHPE
SQUQDZYTIFYISTH
DONKEYYNQSZCKKS
VWTGTWRUUSIRQL
YTI VI TANKHAYAKF
FHZJ DZMHRRYMTKR
VWFRANKINCENSEG
RDAVI DMEHELHTEB

NATIVITY
MARY
JOSEPH
JESUS
MANGER
SHEPHERD
STAR
DAVID
INN
DONKEY
HAY
BETHLEHEM
JOURNEY
ANGEL
WISE
FRANKINCENSE
MYRRH
SHEEP
CAMEL



Meri Kirihimete